

Submission
No 205

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

My name is _____, 33 years old currently residing in _____, NSW. I have two boys, one is 3 years old and one 9 months old. In 2020, I gave birth for the first time in _____ Hospital, _____. As a first time mother, I had no idea whether everything that happened prior, during and post pregnancy/delivery. I first rang the maternity ward at 11:45PM of 29 February 2020, as my, I think then, water broke. I was told to wait until 8:00AM of 1 March 2020 to come in the maternity ward of _____ Hospital.

I fell asleep and woke up at 5:00AM of 1 March 2020 with pain, I was having mild contractions. My partner and I drove to the hospital before 8:00AM, I walked myself to the maternity ward, stopping along the way and up the stairs because of contractions pain. Upon entering, nurses told me to sit in their waiting room, fill up some form and wait. I explained how my waters broke and I felt like the nurse I was talking to then didn't believe me as "first time mothers, usually don't know whether it's their pee or their waters breaking". I explained how I know it's my waters breaking and I was 100% sure it was. I waited a while while having contractions, I had to test my pee for bacteria. I was then moved to a room and told to lay down, I then again explained about the contractions. It was then a nurse (black lady) came in to check for my cervix. She said she needed to check my cervix, all I know is that her fingers will go inside of me.

I didn't get an explanation on how it will happen, what is she going to do, what will happen, nothing. I was there very shocked. The nurse said that I was right that my waters broke and I was already 4cm. She said she "helped open it a bit". Back then, I had no idea what was she talking about. She said I had a long way to go and walking helps with contractions. She said that other mothers in the ward walked themselves to help ease the pain so I should do it too.

I walked outside with her beside me and when a contraction happens, she held me. I was moved to another room where I could lay down. I wasn't asked about epidurals or talked to about pain relievers. When I walked myself to the delivery suite, I had to idea what to do. I was screaming because of pain and the nurse (black lady) told me that I was very loud and could hear me from far away. I was in pain but I remember her chuckling when she said that. I felt embarrassed but my body is telling me to scream so I ignored her. I just wish that nurses treated new mothers as special as newborn babies. I felt like I didn't do the right thing.